

**Burlington Recreation Commission
Meeting September 14, 2022**

Handwritten signatures and initials in blue and purple ink, including "Sch", "BA", and "CRP".

Commissioners in Attendance: Chair Steve Nelson, Vice Chair David Norden, Kevin Sullivan, Bill Gaffney, and Carl Foss.

Staff in Attendance: Parks and Recreation Director Brendan Egan, and Program Coordinator Kelly Lehman

Commissioner Nelson called the meeting to order at 6pm in the School Committee Meeting Room at the Burlington High School, 123 Cambridge Street.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Norden moved to approve the Recreation Commission meeting minutes of August 15, 2022, as amended.

VOTE: 4-0-1

Public Participation

None.

Director of Parks and Recreation Report

Parks and Recreation Director Egan presented the following report:

Pickleball

In a conversation with a member of the Nordbloom Company, it was discussed that they are looking to add a single court in the center of the property at Network Drive, for use by their tenants. There was a discussion of adding multiple courts in one of the side of the parking lots. There is concern of liability due to non-tenant players. Director Egan is following up on this matter.

Simonds Park Pickleball

There was some rain over the holiday weekend; however, Director Egan was unable to connect with the company regarding new material for the pickleball court. Director Egan was able to take some pictures and send them over to the company for reference. There are concerns this new material might not make the court a completely level surface, as well as it may be two different surface materials. The company is looking into an overlay of 2" as well as pricing. If we choose to go with an overlay it would require a Warrant Article for next year for the project.

Commissioner Sullivan asked if they should get a quote for grinding. Director Egan noted he would ask and find out what the best mechanism is and is looking into new fencing.

Commissioner Gaffney noted he saw the sign for the time restrictions at the pickleball court. He added if there is going to be a new sign in the future, perhaps add a message to refrain from playing music as some groups bring speakers to the court which can be a nuisance to the neighbors. Director Egan noted it is updated on the QR code and the individual playing the music has been asked not to.

Commissioner Nelson asked if the street hockey court is going to be moved below, will the sound proofing panels stay in place to eliminate the hockey noise and just add more panels to the court up top. Director Egan noted this is a possibility.

Simonds Park Playground

The planning process has begun to replace the Simonds Park playground which is about 20 years old and is starting to need daily repair and part replacements. They are looking to create a universally accessible playground to allow those of all ability levels to be able to play, learn and grow together. They are looking to utilize the space, add ramps and include elements that are at ground level. **The Marino family** approached the Department and offered their assistance in seeking donations as they have some connections with Burlington businesses as well as being neighbors to the park. Michelle Marino was in attendance to show her support. They are looking to start moving forward with the project this fall and will keep the Commission informed.

Commissioner Sullivan noted if the CPA passes, a new playground would be in contention for the funds. He also added he likes the poured in place instead of the fiber mulch as it will be a safer and more accessible park option. Director Egan added they will also be looking into adding more shading. Director Egan noted that a member of the previous Simonds Park Playground Committee is also interested in being involved in this project.

Commissioner Norden asked what the estimated projected pricing would be for this. Director Egan noted over a half a million, closer to three quarters of a million for several reasons including the equipment, as well as making it universally accessible. Commissioner Norden also asked if CPA passes, and they received some funding as well as private funds, is there an issue converging the two. Director Egan noted there is not, and if CPA passes, it would most likely be a four-prong approach of CPA funding, private funds, a Warrant Article, and possibly some funding from Simonds Trust. Commissioner Sullivan added CPA can work with grants as well.

Commissioner Nelson asked if there was a timeframe in mind. Director Egan noted it would be a multi-year process. Potentially looking for design funding at Town Meeting for FY 24 to start and then work with adding components.

Simonds Park Tree House Project & Groundbreaking

The Tree House Project kicked off on Thursday September 8th. There were some housing delays that needed to be dealt with, but the company did arrive and dropped some support logs and other materials. They were on site confirming the layout and unloading trailers and to prep the site for construction. Helical piles were put in for ramping support. The group has come from different states and are a great group to work with. There will be a private groundbreaking ceremony for the Gillingham Family, the Trustees and the Recreation Commissioners and staff on September 19th Phil Gillingham and Karen Hoyt on behalf of Joshua Simonds will be saying a few words at the Groundbreaking Ceremony. Director Egan noted he would like someone to speak on behalf of the Commission as well.

Commissioner Nelson noted he would be happy to speak at the ceremony.

Director Egan noted that there were some dead trees in the space that were taken down by a tree company and some stumps were ground. The playground was shut down on September 14th, for safety reasons while the company completed the tree work.

Commissioner Nelson asked if there were any Eagle Scouts looking to help on the project. Director Egan noted there was one Eagle Scout and he offered up some ideas but hasn't heard back just yet. Commissioner Nelson also asked if there was anyone interested in making a documentary on the Tree House project. Director Egan added there is some interest with BCAT in following the project.

Parks Superintendent Report

Superintendent Baker was not in attendance. Director Egan presented the following report on his behalf:

Director Egan noted the report was emailed out. He added the pool is closed and everything has been winterized. Staff is continuing with trash and have been lining ballfields, grooming, and prepping all the fields and have changed the layout of the youth soccer fields. Staff also begun the early fall fertilization, starting with aerating, fertilizing and will be overseeding soon. The rain in the past week has helped bring the grass back a bit. They are working on the playground fiber and are answering requests from schools. They installed a few benches on the Town Common as well as preparing the common for September 11th. Most seasonal workers have finished up except for a few that will stay on until Columbus Day. An Eagle Scout helped with adding a gaga ball pit along with some benches at Francis Wyman Elementary School. This has been in the works since the spring. The maintenance staff provided the dump truck as well as four yards of stone dust for the inside.

Commissioner Sullivan noted some of the baseball fields are getting overgrown with weeds. They might not be used but shouldn't be neglected. He asked if this was something that can be addressed before the winter. Director Egan noted they are on the list as there is adult and youth softball teams that are using the fields, but with losing the seasonal staff, they are busy helping in other areas. Commissioner Sullivan also noted there was a sprinkler system that was broken at Marshall Simonds School when the fields were being done and has never been repaired. He asked if it was going to be repaired. Director Egan noted he would follow up with Parks Superintendent Baker and that it might be part of a larger field project.

Commissioner Gaffney asked if the contractor came in and broke the sprinkler system. Commissioner Sullivan noted, when the turf field was done at Marshall Simonds School the system was broken and has never been repaired. Commissioner Gaffney asked if there had been discussion with the contractor regarding the broken system to either fix the problem themselves or find a remedy. Commissioner Sullivan noted it was a school project, but the Maintenance Department maintains the fields.

Programming Report

Program Coordinator Lehman presented the following report:

Programming

Programming Staff has been focusing on wrapping up the summer programs. This year, the adult softball league reached league numbers in teams, reaching pre-covid numbers. The co-ed division completed playoffs and is done for the season. The fun league has their final game on September 15th. The official league is currently in playoffs and should wrap up by the end of the month. Fall program registration began at 6pm on Wednesday, August 31st and was very well received by the community. Staff opened the office from 6pm-8pm to help with any questions and those who wanted to register in person. This was the quietest registration they have had with little to no issues. A big thank you to the staff. Nonresident registration began on Wednesday, September 7th and there was a bump in the registration numbers. A few programs were canceled.

Staff is excited to announce first ever Middle School field hockey team. Staff worked with some coaches in the area to provide clinics for those interested in playing field hockey. There is enough interest to field a team and the schedule was posted September 14th, hosting and traveling to towns such as Chelmsford, North Reading and more.

Commissioner Nelson asked how the player would get to the away games for field hockey. Program Coordinator Lehman noted the parents will have to drive the children.

Special Events

Fourth quarter is the biggest time for special events with ten events in the next four months, starting with Truck Day on Sunday, September 19th. Other events to come are the Fitness Festival, Trucktober, Spooktacular, Candy Crane Drop, Turkey Trot, Disability Awareness Day, Tree Lighting, Calling Santa, Photos with Santa, and Gingerbread House Decorating.

Chairman's Report

None.

Subcommittee Report

None.

New Business

Appointment of Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation

Director Egan noted the job description was approved at the last Recreation Commission meeting, the job was posted and about twenty resumes were received. There were some interviews and we were able to find a candidate. The candidate is Kelly Lehman who is the current Program Coordinator. Kelly has worked for the department for about fourteen years and during her time, the Department has grown exponentially. There has been an increase of 78% in programs, 116% increase in events, 141% in sponsorship and 90% increase in program attendance. She has taken on more administration duties during the transition to a single Director of Parks & Recreation. She has obtained Playground Safety Inspector certification as well as Aquatics Facility Operator on her own time. Her ability to handle any situation that arises with a thought out and calm response, always putting the Department first and ability to see the big picture are assets that can't be overlooked. There is no hesitation in recommending Kelly Lehman for the position and I request the Recreation Commission vote to appoint Kelly Lehman as the Departments first Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation.

Commissioner Sullivan made a motion to appoint Kelly Lehman as the Departments first Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation. Commissioner Gaffney seconded the motion.

Commissioner Sullivan noted that usually a Commissioner or two are involved in the interview process. Director Egan noted he did ask at the last meeting and no one responded. Commissioner Nelson added the interview process is over, but for the next time, they will make sure a Commissioner is present during the interview process.

Commissioner Gaffney agreed with the recommendation. He has had the pleasure of working with Kelly Lehman as a non-commissioner and seen her under pressure and thinks she is an excellent candidate and excited to see her appointed.

Commissioner Nelson agreed and noted there isn't a more qualified candidate for the position.

Commissioner Norden agreed as well. He noted Kelly Lehman has done an unbelievable job and has grown and was able to deal and create programming during the difficult times of COVID and thinks she would be an asset as Assistant Director.

Commissioner Nelson noted Kelly Lehman is the current Program Coordinator and asked if they were considering finding someone to replace her. Director Egan noted if approved tonight, the news will be shared to HR Director to move forward with the offer. If Kelly Lehman accepts, they would look to open up the Program Coordinator position. Commissioner Nelson also asked if the interview process for the Program Coordinator would involve a need for Commissioner to be a part of. Director Egan noted it would and he would follow up to make sure someone was available.

Vote 5-0-0

Revolving Account Expenditures

Vote to authorize the Revolving Account Transfer of \$16,000 to be used for the Simonds Park Basketball Court Renovation Project.

Commissioner Sullivan made a motion approve to authorize the Revolving Account Transfer of \$16,000 to be used for the Simonds Park Basketball Court Renovation Project. Commissioner Norden seconded the motion.

Vote 5-0-0

Simonds Park Basketball Court Renovation

On September 8th, bids were opened for the basketball court renovation project. We received only one bid from Cella Construction, based in Burlington. The bid came in higher than expected at \$198,850. They are working with the contractor to see if there is a way to reduce some of the costs. Currently, the lights, basketball support systems and engineering were purchased off state contract. There is \$160,000 remaining for installation and paving. Some available funds in the revolving account have been identified as well as some that have not been fully expended from Simonds Trust. There is about a \$30,000 difference between the two to get to \$190,000. They are confident to complete the project within that budget figure In order start the project this fall, Director Egan asked for the Commission to vote to award the contract for the Simonds Park Basketball Court Renovation to Cella Construction of Burlington for an amount not to exceed \$190,000. Note, they are still in negotiations with the contractor.

Commissioner Norden made a motion approve the Cella Construction contract to complete the Simonds Park Basketball Court Renovation Project not to exceed the amount of \$190,000. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion.

Commissioner Sullivan asked if there was Simonds Trust funding to cover the difference. Director Egan noted that was correct, there is \$14,000.

Vote 5-0-0

Miscellaneous

The Department of Public Works facility is scheduled for a ribbon cutting on Friday September 23rd at 10am. All Recreation Commissioners are invited to attend.

Commissioner Nelson asked if DPW has moved out of the Parks & Recreation building. Director Egan noted not yet, but everyone was accommodating and made room for each other and equipment during the time shared. Commissioner Nelson also asked if the construction trailers were still out front. Director Egan noted they are and that is where the highway workers have their breakroom. The trailers will be moving when they move to the new facility.

Old Business

Varsity Field Update

The field is ready to go with the turf being delivered on September 21st, with installation beginning shortly after. The track will be replaced around October 6th with the project to be completed between October 15th – 20th. They have been working with teams and Athletic Department to move sports to other fields. Everyone has been cooperating and things have been going smoothly. They are excited for the field to be completed.

Commissioner Nelson asked if they would be missing a home football game due to the field not being complete. Director Egan noted the Athletic Department would know if this would be an issue.

Cricket Pitch

The Maintenance staff has been working on a cricket pitch at Mitre Field. The area has been prepared and the cricket mat has been delivered to our garage and is ready to be rolled out. The mat will be taken off after each game and placed in a storage container.

Executive Session

Not Required.

Adjourn

VOTE: 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at

Next meeting is TBD

Respectfully submitted,
Emily O'Donoghue
Recording Clerk